

SENATE—Wednesday, May 2, 2001

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable GEORGE ALLEN, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Holy God, before Whom we dare not swagger in self-sufficiency, we humbly confess our need for You. We don't have all the answers; we are not always right; and we are not perfect in our judgments of people or what is best. We turn to You for wisdom, penetrating insight, and precise analysis. Bless the Senators to know that You give the day and You provide the way. Thank You for their deep desire to know what is right and do it, to discern Your best for America, and to pledge their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to achieve it. We join with the psalmist, claiming Your promise: "The humble You guide in justice and the humble You teach Your way."—Based on Psalm 25:9. May our fresh praise for Your blessings be the antidote to any false pride. You alone are the source, security, peace, and hope because You alone are our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable GEORGE ALLEN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. THURMOND).

The bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 2, 2001.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable GEORGE ALLEN, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Virginia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

STROM THURMOND,
President pro tempore.

Mr. ALLEN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wyoming.

SCHEDULE

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, today the Senate will resume the remaining hours of the postcloture debate on the motion to proceed on the education bill.

CHARGING OF TIME

I now ask unanimous consent that the time until 10:30 a.m. be equally divided in the usual form and that it be charged accordingly under rule XXII.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. THOMAS. The Senate is expected to begin full consideration of the bill during today's session. Therefore, amendments will be offered, and votes on the amendments are expected. Members will be notified as the votes are scheduled. Senators are encouraged to work with the bill managers if they intend to offer amendments to the bill.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

BETTER EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume postcloture consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 1.

The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I would like to have the opportunity to discuss the education bill for 10 minutes, please.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wyoming is so recognized for 10 minutes.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, we come to the floor again today to consider education. I think, unfortunately, we are still talking about the postcloture motion and have not yet had the opportunity actually to move to the bill. We are hopeful there will be some decisions made in the next hour, hour and a half, so that we can come to the bill.

Clearly, there will be differences of our views with respect to this legislation. That is not a new idea. But we need to get on with it. We need to come to this Chamber and begin to make our arguments and, where there are differences of opinion, have amendments and move forward with them.

I think most people agree that one of the major issues before us is education. Certainly there are different views as to what the role of the Federal Government is with regard to elementary and secondary education. There are different views as to how much involvement the Federal Government ought to have with respect to financing elementary and secondary education.

I think most of us believe that is a primary function of the State and local governments, and has been traditionally over time, and I believe for good reason. No. 1, we want the control largely to remain there; indeed, it should remain there.

With respect to money, even though, obviously, it is very important, money is not the only salvation for education. There needs to be policy changes. There needs to be more accountability, measurement of progress. Money alone—and we talked about this when I was in the Wyoming legislature—we know that money alone is not the only salvation, that there need to also be these other principles. But without money, of course, those things cannot be accomplished.

Since 1994, when the Republicans took over Congress as the majority, there has been a 50-percent increase in funding for education. We will hear about how the Republicans are reluctant to fund education properly. The fact is, this Republican Congress has funded it at a much higher rate than was done previously by the Democrats or, indeed, even suggested under the Clinton administration. It still is an issue, but the idea that Republicans have not been generous with money is just simply not factual.

There are other issues, however, that are really key to what we want to do with S. 1. First, it is symbolic that it is S. 1. That indicates that as we came into this Congress, education was our highest priority. So there we are.

There are a number of things that are very important. One is accountability. Title I of this bill indicates that when schools fail to adequately have progress, they will receive technical assistance from the Federal Government. In order to make sure there is progress, of course, there has to be some testing.

Clearly, there are different views about testing: Whether it ought to be mandated, whether it ought to be done only by the State's decision. I happen to believe the States ought to be the ones to decide how it is done. But there needs to be testing if you are going to have Federal funding. If you are going to have the kind of mobility we have